



MODTAGET
LEDELSESSEKRETARIATET

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February 16, 2009

Excellency:

Allow me to take the liberty of inviting the attention of your government to the recent Visa Waiver Test Outcomes by the Home Office of the United Kingdom, according to which the UK will lift the visitor visa requirement for Taiwan passport holders coming to the UK for less than six months, and who are not seeking to work. The measure will take effect from 3 March 2009.

It is our hope that the remaining EU member states will follow the example of the United Kingdom and grant visa-exemption treatment to Taiwan nationals. Several arguments support this decision:

- 1) Taiwan nationals do not pose an illegal immigration threat.
- 2) Taiwan encourages freedom of movement internationally.
- 3) Taiwan is a credible participant in the global security mechanism.
- 4) It will enhance bilateral tourism and trade relations.

Taiwan has already decided to grant visa exemption treatment to all EU member states. Today 24 EU member states enjoy visa-free entry to Taiwan and most EU countries have shown a willingness to offer reciprocal treatment to Taiwan nationals.

Full reciprocity will benefit both Denmark and Taiwan. We therefore sincerely hope that the Danish government will follow the UK example and support Taiwan's initiative and coordinate with other EU countries to grant visa-exemption treatment to the people of Taiwan.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to your Excellency the assurance of my highest considerations.

Sincerely yours,

Charles Liu
Representative of Taiwan

Encl.

February 5, 2009

Appeal for the European Union to Grant Visa-exemption Treatment to Taiwan Nationals

Nationals of the Republic of China (Taiwan) deserve to enjoy visa-exemption treatment from the European Union. It is also in the interests of the European Union to grant visa-exemption for Taiwanese nationals for the following reasons:

Taiwan nationals do not pose an illegal immigration threat

The immigration risks potentially associated with the lifting of the visa requirement for Taiwanese passport holders are limited. Taiwan's GDP per capita stood at around US\$18,000 in 2007, and the unemployment rate hovers at just 4%. The crime rate in Taiwan was 1,160 cases per 100,000 people in 2007. Furthermore, Taiwan is overall a stable country that enjoys good social order, and Taiwanese nationals are rarely involved in illegal immigration or criminal activities in Europe. The visa denial percentage and public security risk originating from Taiwanese visitors are also very low.

Taiwan encourages freedom of movement internationally

Based on the spirit of the 1944 Chicago Convention and its subsidiary conventions, Taiwan has long encouraged and facilitated the exchange of visits among peoples and the free flow of ideas. Taiwan has granted visa-exemption to the nationals of 38 countries. Of these, 27 are European countries, including 24 EU member states.

Taiwan is a credible participant in the global passport security mechanism

The risk of Taiwanese passports being used by illegal migrants from neighboring countries (including mainland China) is low, and on a par with the risk posed by Hong Kong, Korean or Japanese passports. Taiwan has successfully implemented measures to prevent the counterfeiting and

tampering of passports, and the number of mainland Chinese nationals caught using fake or tampered Taiwanese passports has steadily declined. In 2005, around 418 such cases were recorded, which decreased to 343 in 2006 and 239 in 2007. According to official statistics released by Canada, counterfeit Taiwanese passports account for only 5 percent of all counterfeit passports found, which is on a par with Japan and lower than Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea.

In response to the relevant UN counter-terrorism actions, Taiwanese authorities are taking further steps to protect against the illegal use of identity documents. This includes the introduction of biometric passports, a new passport format containing a chip that stores the holder's picture and personal data. Also, these passports will only be issued against a new, more secure, national ID card. Taiwan started issuing biometric passports on December 29, 2008, becoming one of 60 countries which have adopted this passport security mechanism.

The Taiwan tourist market is ripe for the EU to tap into

Of the more than 8 million overseas trips currently made by people from Taiwan every year, only around 260,000 are to Europe. There is clearly great potential for Europe to attract more Taiwanese tourists. However, a survey of Taiwanese travel patterns shows that a time-consuming visa application process makes a destination far less attractive to them. Conversely, after Japan granted Taiwan nationals visa-exemption treatment in 2005, the number of Taiwanese tourists visiting that country grew from 1 million in 2004 to 1.3 million in 2005. This is clear evidence that visa-exemption treatment plays an important role in attracting visitors from Taiwan.

A means to enhance bilateral trade relations

Trade relations between Taiwan and the European Union are close and cordial, yet bilateral trade with the EU only accounted for 10% of Taiwan's total trade volume in 2007. There is plenty of room for growth. Taiwan is the world's 16th largest economy and enjoys a trade volume

with the EU that is comparable to the latter's trade volume with India or Brazil. Granting visa-exemption treatment to Taiwanese nationals will encourage businesspeople from Taiwan to further invest and do business in Europe, thereby enhancing our substantive bilateral economic ties.

Taiwan's tourists are welcomed by many like-minded countries

Currently, some 30 countries, including Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Guam, provide visa-exemption treatment to the people of Taiwan, while denying the same treatment to some of Taiwan's neighboring countries (such as mainland China). Despite the absence of diplomatic relations, substantive bilateral exchanges between Taiwan and these countries have grown dramatically thanks to visa-exemption treatment.

Granting Taiwan nationals visa-exemption treatment would not affect the EU's relations with other Asian countries

Nowadays, visa regimes are based on immigration risk assessments and not political considerations. Asian countries like Japan, Singapore and South Korea that grant visa-exemptions to Taiwan nationals maintain stable relations with neighboring Asian countries (including mainland China). This will also hold true for the EU if it grants such treatment to Taiwan nationals.

Arrangements can be made for visits to Europe by prominent Taiwanese political figures

After Japan granted visa-exemption treatment to Taiwan nationals, a gentleman's agreement was reached between the two whereby Taiwan is to inform Japan in advance about visits by high-level Taiwanese political figures, such as the president, vice-president, premier, minister of foreign affairs and so forth. An arrangement of the same nature could be made with the EU if visa exemptions are granted to Taiwan nationals.

The EU's core value of non-discrimination calls for reciprocal visa-exemption treatment

In accordance with the demands of their constituents, Taiwan's legislators have time and again expressed discontent with the unequal visa treatment from the EU side. By the same token, the legislature has asked the government to review its current visa-exemption measures, based on the principle of reciprocity.

The Taiwan authorities have decided to grant visa exemption treatment to all EU member states. So far, 24 EU member states enjoy visa-free entry to Taiwan, and most of the EU countries have shown a willingness to offer reciprocal treatment to Taiwan nationals. We are currently waiting for responses from Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus before making the necessary arrangements accordingly.

Full reciprocity would benefit the nationals of all EU members as well as Taiwan, and could be reached in the near future. Thus, Taiwan urges the EU to seriously consider granting visa-exemption treatment to the people of Taiwan.

E.R

Monday, 9 February 2009

HOME OFFICE

Visa Waiver Test Outcomes

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Jacqui Smith): Today my right honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and I are announcing the final outcomes of the UK's first global review of its visa regimes.

Britain thrives as a society and economy which is open for business, education, culture and tourism to people from around the world, but we want to do that in a way that enables us to distinguish clearly and effectively legitimate from illegitimate travellers. We are completing some of the biggest ever changes to strengthen Britain's border security by implementing a system of triple checks: stronger overseas checks including fingerprint visas and wider pre-arrival screening; tougher checks at the UK border itself; and strong new measures within the UK: against illegal immigration, organised crime and other threats.

The Visa Waiver Test process, announced in March 2007, further strengthens the UK border by ensuring that our visa regimes are properly targeted. A visa regime is a simple but very effective immigration, crime and security control measure.

The Visa Waiver Test measured travel from every country and region beyond the European Economic Area and Switzerland against a range of criteria including illegal immigration, crime and security concerns.

As part of the Test we also considered whether any countries or regions posed a sufficiently low risk such as to warrant the lifting of an existing visitor visa requirement, so as to facilitate legitimate travel.

In the final stage of the Test we worked closely with eleven countries whose nationals had been identified as posing a sufficiently high risk as to warrant, in principle, the introduction of a visa requirement for all travellers. We worked with the countries concerned over a six month period to find ways to reduce the risks posed to the UK without the need for a visa requirement.

We have been able to make real progress with a number of countries through a combination of advice, training and improved working relations on migration matters. As a result some of the eleven countries have made concrete improvements to the immigration, border control and identity systems which would not have happened without the Test. Even where a visa regime is the final outcome, we have improved co-operation on migration matters with the countries concerned. At the end of this process we assessed the overall progress made by each country, and whether or not it was sufficient to mitigate the risks to the UK.

We will not be introducing new visa requirements at this time for certain countries involved in the final stage of the Test: Botswana, Brazil, Malaysia, Mauritius,

Namibia, and Trinidad & Tobago. We will continue to work with these countries on migration matters and assess the effectiveness of the actions taken. Should circumstances warrant it, we will re-examine the situation and take prompt action.

We have also concluded that Taiwan presents a low migration risk and we will be lifting the visitor visa requirement for Taiwan passport holders coming to the UK for less than six months, and who are not seeking to work. This will take effect from 3 March.

We have decided to introduce new visa requirements for Bolivia, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland and Venezuela. This means that short-term visitors from these countries will need to apply for a six month visa and provide their fingerprints, before travelling to the UK. Nationals of these countries seeking to travel via the UK en route to another country will also need a transit visa. This is in addition to the existing requirement for a visa in order to live, work, study or marry in the UK.

In the case of South Africa, we will introduce the visa requirement in two stages. The first stage, beginning on 3 March, will require only first time visitors to the UK from South Africa to obtain a visa. Those who can show a satisfactory previous travel history to the UK will initially be exempt from the visa requirement. This exemption must be evidenced by a UK entry stamp in their current passport. We will introduce the full visa regime by the middle of 2009.

In the case of Venezuela we will require visas from their nationals but we will waive this requirement for all those travelling on biometric, machine readable passports. This is because our main concern related to the ease with which old-style Venezuelan passports could be forged or fraudulently obtained. Our assessment is that their new-style passports are secure and that the new visa requirement is proportionate to the remaining risk posed by the old-style passports.

We will announce implementation dates for the full visa regime for South Africa, and the visa regimes for Bolivia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Venezuela, in due course. Implementation for all these countries will be by the middle of 2009. We will announce the final dates at least 21 days before imposition.

All the new visa regimes will be implemented to the high standard of the UK's current visa operations.

Separately to the Visa Waiver Test, we have also decided to introduce a transit visa requirement for nationals of Jamaica. In January 2003 a visa requirement was introduced for Jamaican nationals visiting the United Kingdom. It did not include a requirement to obtain a transit visa when passing through the UK to another destination. We have been monitoring the situation and have found evidence that some Jamaican nationals have attempted to exploit the visa-free transit concession to enter and remain in the UK illegally. The requirement for a transit visa will take effect from 3 March.

The Visa Waiver Test is ongoing. We will conduct a full review in due course to ensure that benefits are fully realised and costs understood. In the meantime we will continue to work with all these countries and regions to build on the excellent

working relationships we have developed during the Visa Waiver Test process to make sure we effectively secure the UK Border.